

Message Text

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APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

ARA - MR. KUBISCH

NEA - MR. SOBER

S/S -MR. FRY

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 118979

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, A, XIM

SUBJECT: LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY TO ARGENTINE FOREIGN
MINISTER VIGNES

1. PLEASE PASS THE FOLLOWING LETTER FROM SECRETARY KISSINGER TO FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME:
 2. BEGIN TEXT: DEAR MR. MINISTER: A GREAT DEAL HAS HAPPENED IN THE SHORT TIME SINCE WE LAST HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK IN WASHINGTON AND ATLANTA. YOU WILL REMEMBER THAT I WAS PLANNING TO LEAVE SHORTLY FOR THE MIDDLE EAST TO CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TOWARDS REACHING A LASTING PEACE AGREEMENT IN THAT TROUBLED AREA. BECAUSE OF YOUR INTEREST IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS I WANT TO GIVE YOU MY IMPRESSION OF THE HIGHLIGHTS.
 3. IT WAS CLEAR AFTER THE EGYPT-ISRAEL DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED JANUARY 18 THAT A SIMILAR STEP WITH RESPECT TO SYRIA AND ISRAEL WOULD BE NECESSARY IF THE MOMENTUM TOWARD PEACE THAT WAS BEING GATHERED WAS NOT TO
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BE LOST. HAPPILY, BOTH SYRIA AND ISRAEL EXPRESSED INTEREST

IN SUCH AN AGREEMENT AND IN UTILIZING AMERICAN GOOD OFFICES TO ACHIEVE IT.

4. WE KNEW THAT THIS WOULD BE A DIFFICULT NEGOTIATION,

AND IT WAS INDEED ARDUOUS. THE POSITIONS OF THE PARTIES WERE FAR APART INITIALLY AND IT WAS ONLY THROUGH THE MOST PAINSTAKING EFFORT THAT THE GAP BETWEEN THEM WAS CLOSED. BUT, I WANT TO STRESS, HOWEVER TENACIOUSLY THE TWO SIDES ADVANCED THEIR POSITIONS, I WAS ALWAYS CONVINCED OF THEIR GOOD FAITH AND SERIOUSNESS OF INTENT. THE DEPLORABLE EVENTS OF MAALOT AND SUBSEQUENT ISRAELI ACTIONS AGAINST TARGETS IN LEBANON DID NOT DIVERT THEM FROM THEIR GOAL. BOTH SIDES CLEARLY WANTED THIS AGREEMENT AND WOULD NOT BE TURNED AWAY FROM IT BY A CHAIN OF EVENTS INSTIGATED BY EXTRA-GOVERNMENTAL ELEMENTS. I BELIEVE THIS CAN BE A GOOD AUGURY FOR THE WHOLE PEACE PROCESS.

5. THE AGREEMENT ITSELF IS WELL DESIGNED TO ACCOMPLISH ITS MAIN PURPOSES. THE CEASE-FIRE IS TO BE SCRUPULOUSLY OBSERVED FROM THE DATE OF ITS SIGNING. THE MILITARY FORCES OF THE TWO SIDES WILL BE SEPARATED BY A BUFFER ZONE AND THE LEVELS OF THEIR ARMAMENTS WILL BE LIMITED ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS ZONE. A UNITED NATIONS FORCE WILL BE EMPLACED TO INSPECT COMPLIANCE. PRISONERS OF WAR AND THE BODIES OF THE DEAD WILL BE EXCHANGED. IN BRIEF, ALL THE PAINFUL, VEXING ELEMENTS EXISTING IN THE SYRIAN-ISRAELI CONFRONTATION THAT HAVE PRODUCED AND PERPETUATED A BLOODY WAR OF ATTRITION IN RECENT MONTHS WILL BE REMOVED OR NEUTRALIZED.

6. WE MUST, OF COURSE, RECOGNIZE REALISTICALLY WHAT THIS AGREEMENT IS NOT. IT IS NOT A PEACE AGREEMENT, AS ITS FINAL PARAGRAPH STATES; IT IS A STEP TOWARD A JUST AND DURABLE PEACE ON THE BASIS OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 338 OF OCTOBER 22, 1973. THE BASIC ISSUES BETWEEN ISRAEL AND SYRIA REMAIN, AND IF THIS NEGOTIATION IS ANY INDICATION, THEIR RESOLUTION WILL BE DIFFICULT AND COMPLEX.

7. BUT I BELIEVE WE MAY BE PERMITTED REAL HOPE FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

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FUTURE BY WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. AS PRESIDENT NIXON HAS SAID, A MAJOR ROADBLOCK TO A PERMANENT SETTLEMENT HAS BEEN REMOVED. WE CONSIDER THIS AGREEMENT TO BE A PIVOTAL ONE. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1949, SYRIA HAS MADE AN AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL; THIS CANNOT FAIL TO HAVE AN INFLUENCE ON OTHER ARAB STATES WHO HAVE RESISTED ANY COMMITMENT TO PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS OF SEEKING PEACE THROUGH NEGOTIATION. FOR ARAB STATES ALREADY EM-

BARKED ON THIS COURSE THE AGREEMENT CAN ONLY REINFORCE THEIR COMMITMENT. FOR ISRAEL, THE AGREEMENT MEANS A SURCEASE, IN WHICH ITS OWN THINKING ABOUT THE SHAPE OF ITS FUTURE RELATIONS WITH ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS CAN FURTHER EVOLVE.

8. THE SYRIA-ISRAEL DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT IS AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE IN A STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS. A FOUNDATION IS NOW ESTABLISHED WITHIN WHICH THE SHOOTING CAN STOP AND PREPARATIONS CAN BEGIN FOR CONSIDERING THOSE BASIC ISSUES THAT WILL BE INVOLVED IN A PEACE AGREEMENT.

9. I AM PLEASED THAT THE FOLLOW THROUGH ON THE WASHINGTON MEETING IS WELL UNDERWAY AND THAT ARGENTINA AS THE SECRETARIAT PRO TEMPORE IS COORDINATING THESE EFFORTS. THERE IS MUCH THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO PREPARE FOR OUR NEXT SESSION IN BUENOS AIRES. IN THE MEANWHILE, I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU ON HOW WE CAN BEST CONTRIBUTE TO THOSE PREPARATIONS.

10. WITH WARMEST REGARDS AND BEST WISHES, HENRY A. KISSINGER. END TEXT. KISSINGER

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